

PROWLER

Quince Orchard High School • 15800 Quince Orchard Rd, Gaithersburg, MD 20878

What the impeachment inquiry means for Trump

By **ASHLEIGH GORDON**
Editor-in-Chief

When the Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi proposed the impeachment inquiry in the House of Representatives on September 24, people all around began questioning what this means for our country. On October 31, the House passed a vote to formalize procedures for the impeachment inquiry.

The inquiry followed a whistleblower claim that President Trump had pressured leaders of foreign nations to investigate former Vice President Joe Biden and his son, Hunter.

These allegations, if accurate, could be used to support the idea of the president abusing his power of the presidency to advance his personal and political interests—developing a basis for an impeachment inquiry.

On July 18, Trump instructed his staff to place a hold on Congressionally-mandated military aid to Ukraine. The following week, Trump and Ukraine President Zelensky spoke over the phone, where Trump allegedly pressured Zelensky into an investigation on the Bidens.

Five years ago, Hunter Biden took a paid position on the board of a natural gas company, Burisma, in Ukraine. Trump falsely claimed that Joe Biden, while in office as Vice President, had threatened to withhold money from Ukraine if a Ukrainian prosecutor was not dismissed in order to protect his son from investigation. According to factcheck.org, a non-profit website and “consumer advocate for voters,” Hunter Biden was never investigated.

While these claims from Trump were pure fiction, Trump’s request for investigation on the phone call still represents a wrong-doing by the president, showcasing

an abuse of power.

Democrats in the House have been trying to formally denounce the President, but recent efforts of theirs have failed. From the supposed Russian interference in the 2016 election, to the association of the President with white nationalism and neo-Nazism, the efforts to hold President Trump accountable have seemed to be never-ending.

Up until 2019, Republicans had a majority in both the House and the Senate, making it nearly impossible for any impeachment inquiry to be investigated since Republicans were unwilling to vote publicly for one. Once the Democrats

won the majority in the House in the 2018 midterm elections, however, the impeachment inquiry was able to move forward.

Many students at QO have been talking about the impeachment inquiry, but only a few fully understand the true process that impeachment requires. When students hear the word “impeachment,” they see it as removal from office. Junior Reagan Ambrose, for example, thought that “impeachment leads to the President being kicked out of office.”

However, in order for a president to be removed from office, they must be convicted in the Senate by a two thirds majority. Currently, having a Republican majority in the Senate does not make the conviction of Trump seem likely, even if he were to be indicted by the House.

While the final decision regarding Trump’s actions is far from being released, the steps taken by Pelosi have jump-started the investigation that could ultimately lead to the third ever Presidential impeachment. Both Andrew Johnson, in 1868, and Bill Clinton, in 1998, were impeached but never convicted by the Senate. Will Trump follow in their footsteps? Only time will tell.



PHOTO COURTESY OF CNN.COM

Students report ‘Parrot Man’ sightings in Rio

Who is this man and why does he have a parrot?

By **SARA KLEMOW**
Staff Writer

Washingtonian Blvd.’s Rio may not be Rio de Janeiro, but a parrot can still be found in our local shopping center. An old man with a parrot on his shoulder has been spotted walking around Rio multiple times with his wife.

Workers at Rio reportedly see ‘Parrot Man’ all the time. “His wife does come in... he just sits out there,” says a Starbucks employee, pointing to the outside tables in front of the store.

A Lilly Magilly’s Cupcakery employee also sees him at Rio on weekends and sometimes on weekdays. “He’s very quiet [and] keeps to himself,” the employee says.

Quince Orchard students have also spotted ‘Parrot Man’ when they are at Rio. “I was at Rio by the duck feeders, and I saw this bird and I thought maybe he was paid to be there. Then I saw him again like the next day,” says senior Drew Reuschlein. “This guy probably lives around here; that’s probably actually his bird.”

Additionally, sophomore Sophia Da Silva has seen him out and about. “The first time I actually saw Parrot Man was

in Rockville Town Square,” she said. “A couple weeks or something later, I went to the Rio and I saw him [again]. People come up to him and ask him about his

parrot and take pictures of him and his parrot.”

In fact, senior Travis Mulford took pictures with the bird last year during his

prom photoshoot at Rio. “He just walks around with it,” Mulford says. “They let me put [the parrot] on my arm.” Mulford says that when the parrot was on his arm, the man told him not to look into his eyes or the parrot would attack him.

The real question raised here: why does this man have a parrot? It is possible that it is just his pet and he is taking his parrot out for a walk. However, another possibility is that the parrot is an emotional support animal.

Over the past few years, there is a growing use of parrots as emotional support animals, also known as service animals. “With innate abilities to mimic human voice and acquiring phrases to use, the parrot is able to provide a calming influence over those suffering from various levels of anxieties,” according to an online post by Matt Rowe from the Lafeber Company, a group of veterinarians and nutritionists who make bird food.

“Parrots are known to be intuitively aware of the human emotion,” Rowe adds. “They can sense when their owner becomes angry, when they become stressed and begin to grow tense as a result. By the trained use of certain phrases, they can soothe an increasingly agitated individual.”



PHOTO COURTESY OF GERARD MULFORD

PICTURE PERFECT: Senior Travis Mulford poses for prom pictures with the man’s parrot in Rio.

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The Prowler gladly accepts comments, concerns, and letters to the editor. Letters may be emailed to qohsprowler@gmail.com, mailed c/o The Prowler to the school address above, or dropped off directly to Ms. Cooley-Klein in Room 241. Letters may be edited for space and clarity.

ABOUT

The Prowler is published six times a year by the students of Quince Orchard High School, and it has been continuously published since the 1988-89 school year. To become a staff member, students take Journalism A & B to qualify for the Advanced Publications class.



What the heck is going on with Brexit?

By **JAY MOTIWALA**
Staff Writer

Brexit is a very complicated situation occurring in the UK, as politics and real-life consequences could be synonymous with one another like never before if Brexit comes into effect for the British government. So, what is Brexit, and how could its outcome greatly change the lives of those living in the UK, right now and in the future?

On June 23, 2016, a public vote or referendum, asking whether the United Kingdom should stay in the European Union (EU) or leave, garnered the consensus of the people instead of the elected officials. The people ruled 52% to 48% in favor of leaving the EU, with the move being called “Brexit”—the word “Britain” and “exit” mixed together.

Some reasons why the majority voted in favor of this move were due to their worry about how their economy would be impacted by the EU. The recession of 2008 was bad for the United States, but it was worse for European countries in the EU, as the eurozone collapsed back into a recession instead of healing as quickly as the United States economy did.

And while the economy eventually did heal (the economy of the UK wasn’t impacted as

badly as countries like Greece), this financial disaster caused the people in Britain to worry. Would staying in the EU cause their economy to fail at a worse rate than if they were to leave it?

Many politicians have been lobbying for the UK to exit the EU as well, with many in the Conservative Party and the Independent Party campaigning for the country to leave. They argue that the financial restrictions placed on them by the EU have led their country to not be as prosperous as they could be. Also, the Conservative Party objects to the aid of Syrian refugees at the rate that the EU has been aiding them.

Meanwhile, those opposed to Brexit say that the economy will never recover if Britain exits the EU. They also worry that Britain may not be able to properly transition to life without the EU, and they don’t want trade with the rest of the countries in the EU to be affected negatively.

These coupling ideologies and the rising tensions between politicians within the UK have led to ongoing Brexit negotiations. So if it was voted on in 2016, why hasn’t Brexit happened yet?

Theresa May, the former UK Prime Minister, triggered Article 50—the formal process to leave the EU—two years before the proposed deal was supposed to

happen on March 29, 2019. However, the Brexit date has been delayed twice. May’s failure to negotiate a deal with Parliament for Brexit led to her resignation on March 27, 2019.

Now, new Prime Minister Boris Johnson is also in favor of Brexit and has been fervently working to ensure a deal with Parliament is made.

The purpose of a deal is to ensure that the economy of the UK won’t fail immediately and to ensure that the commerce trade deal discussions with the EU will remain. The UK could go with a “no-deal Brexit,” which would have the UK exit the EU without an immediate financial plan.

On October 21, Johnson and the EU’s joint deal, the “Withdrawal Agreement Bill,” was rejected in a vote by Parliament, forcing Johnson to request the EU for an extension, by the Benn Act, so Parliament could have more time to agree on the deal. If Parliament ends up not approving any deal, the UK would leave the EU with a no-deal Brexit.

Although Johnson promised voters that a Brexit deal would happen by October 31, he has since backed down on that promise, instead campaigning for a late winter Brexit date.

On October 28, EU ambassadors agreed to delay Britain’s exit from the EU, with a date set for January 2020 as the deadline

to negotiate Brexit.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson asked Parliament to have a snap election on December 12, and they voted in favor of it. This early election was proposed so the Conservative Party could gain the majority of seats in Parliament, in order for a Brexit deal to be more likely accepted. The two main parties, Boris Johnson’s Conservatives and Jeremy Corbyn’s Labour Party, both have Brexit plans, and are the most likely in contention for the election win. If the Conservatives win, Brexit will most likely happen on January 31, and if the Labour Party wins, there will most likely be a second referendum to determine if the people want Brexit. There could be a stalemate, where no party wins the majority of seats in Parliament, which could leave Brexit’s fate up in the air.

Time will tell how Brexit will play out, with the possibility that the UK will be the first-ever country to leave the EU, with or without a deal. Or this talk could all be for naught if a deal for Brexit can’t be achieved and, instead of leaving with a no-deal, the UK decides to stay in the EU.

No matter the outcome, the journey of Brexit has gone through tumultuous developments, with this process changing European history, politics, and economics forever.

NEWS FLASHES

Supposed officer shooting revealed to be suicide



PHOTO COURTESY OF GAITHERSBURGM.D.GOV

By **MADDY FREEDMAN**
Staff Writer

On an early October morning, a Montgomery County Police Officer was found shot in a Silver Spring parking garage and later pronounced dead at MedStar Washington Hospital Center. His death, however, is not a closed case. On the morning in question, Officer Thomas J. Bomba—a Gaithersburg resident, husband, and father—made a radio call reporting “disorderly subjects” on the roof of a park-

ing garage in Silver Spring. When officers arrived on the scene as backup after hearing no response from Bomba, they found him on the parking garage floor with a single gunshot wound. Bomba’s wound was later discovered to have come from his own gun. This led to an autopsy conducted by the Chief Medical Examiner of the District of Columbia, where they ruled his death a suicide. This leaves many questions unanswered as police investigators work to piece together all of the information they can find through any evidence available.

Rep. Elijah Cummings working till his last breath

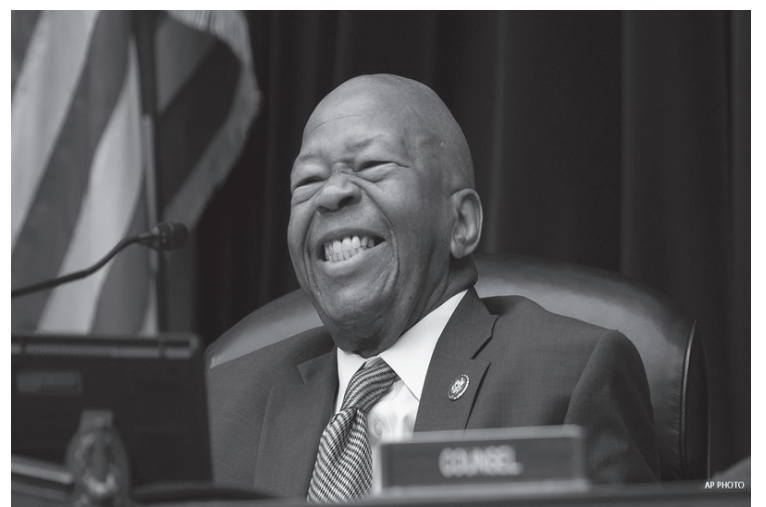


PHOTO COURTESY OF ABC7NY.COM

By **SARA KLEMOW**
Staff Writer

Maryland’s 7th Congressional District Representative, Elijah Cummings, died on October 17 in Baltimore, Maryland. It is known that Cummings was battling cancer; however, his office said that his cause of death was long-standing health problems. Cummings was the chairman of the House Oversight and Reform Committee. He continued to work from his hospital bed. Some of the work Cummings did in the last few weeks of his

life included sponsoring a bill to improve care for people with asthma and signing impeachment-related subpoenas, along with much more impeachment-related work. On October 24, Cummings lay in state in the National Statuary Hall at the U.S. Capitol. “Lying in state” is when a deceased government official’s body or coffin is placed in the Capitol building, specifically the rotunda, for colleagues to pay their respects. Lying in state is a great honor; Cummings was the 32nd person lain in state. May he rest in peace.



More than a plastic straw: the truth of our planet's pollution

By **MIA RESNICOW**
Staff Writer

All it takes is a gust of wind to blow trash into the ocean. A plastic straw left on the beach, a styrofoam cup blown off a boat, even a soda can dropped on the sidewalk can get caught in runoff. It would be easy if the solution was to stop littering, but the sorrowful truth is the pollution of our planet is caused by so much more; it's not just about plastic straws.

According to Global Citizen, a non-profit initiative focusing on environmental and social issues, there are 2,000 active landfills in the US alone. In those 2,000 landfills, there's over 6 billion metric tons of plastic waste sitting in mountains of trash, and the reality is this: that plastic is recycled plastic. According to National Geographic, 91% of recycled plastic ends up in landfills.

When we think of climate change, we think of recycling, and turning off the lights. We believe it is only a problem we will have to deal with in the future, not a problem we have to deal with now. However, we are being affected now; it goes far beyond rising temperatures and melting ice. Not only is this a worldwide problem, it's our problem. New Orleans is going underwater, cities in Texas are still recovering from 2017's Hurricane Harvey, and the state of California is, quite literally, on fire because of the rising temperatures mixed with the dry, windy conditions.

So what can we do? First, we have to think about intersectionality. Intersectionality is the interconnectedness and overlap of social organizations such as race, class and gender, every minority in Quince Orchard falls into this category. We have to realize that just buying a Hydroflask, or not taking a straw when you pick up your daily coffee at Starbucks, is

not a lasting global solution. Starbucks's new "adult sippy cup" is a good effort, but the cup itself is still plastic. Using a reusable bottle and straws instead of plastic helps, but intersectionality shows us that this solution is not for everyone. For example, people with disabilities benefit from using plastic straws because of mobility limitations.

Another example is in indigenous reservations are being targeted, as a way to redirect population away from urban areas. In North Dakota, an oil pipeline is being added near Native American tribes as the Trump administration attempts to increase domestic energy production. The Dakota Access Pipeline causes a threat to their environment and will pollute the river they use as a water source.

An easy solution is to think about sustainability. Remember in elementary school? There were posters stuck to the wall that read "Reduce, Reuse and Recycle." One solution, for example, is to

buy and sell used clothes; it's cheaper and aids the environment more than you could imagine. When you buy from brands that aren't sustainable, you fund companies that participate in air pollution, company misconduct, and a waste of materials, and the more you buy, the more they sell. There is so much more we can do for the environment than just giving up plastic straws.



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The stress of college apps

By **NATALIE PRICE**
Staff Writer

As we are midway through November, many of us are impatiently waiting for turkey dinners, apple pie, and the overall vibe of Thanksgiving. Seniors, on the other hand, are desperately running around and stressing about the only thing that fills their mind: college applications.

Fall and early winter can be an incredibly anxious time as deadlines for many applications are November 1 (early action) and various dates in December and early January (regular decision).

One popular approach by Quince Orchard seniors who are applying to college is working with CollegeTracks, which is located in the Media Center. This organization provides assistance throughout the whole college application process from essay writing to filling out financial aid application forms.

CollegeTracks works one on one in order to “get a good feel and really try to get to know [their] students,” according to Program Coordinator Daisy Faria. With the students’ best interests in mind, staff members will review applications and offer resume workshops directly alongside students the whole way.

CollegeTracks is just one of the many strategies students use while working on their applications. Senior Katie Orr finds that another approach is to “go to the college meetings when the schools you

want to go to come to QO.” By doing so, students can get great opportunities to talk to admissions officers and ask questions.

“Having your English teacher edit your essays and give you feedback is helpful as well,” Orr said.

Senior Evan Young also advises to “finish all your essays at least a week before the deadline, so you can have people check them and not worry about submitting the night before.”

Quince Orchard offers numerous tools to aid students in their college application process, many of which are located right here in the building. For any seniors stressing about essays and deadlines, talk to your counselor to figure out which strategies work best for you.

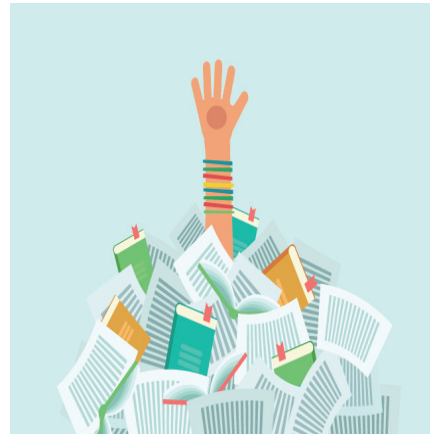


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CollegeTracks helping students

By **MELANIE FRANK**
Staff Writer

Like every high school, Quince Orchard is filled with students working to achieve their goals and figure out their plans for the future. To help ease the stress and guide students in the college application process, Quince Orchard partners with an organization for juniors and seniors called CollegeTracks, which gives students an in-school opportunity to have their own college counselor and someone to keep them on track while answering any questions they have.

Many seniors who have completed their college applications give their thanks to CollegeTracks. Senior Josie Juhring’s favorite part of working with College Tracks was the way they “could answer any questions [she] had, no matter how small the questions were. I honestly recommend it to younger kids, especially because I had no idea what I was doing,” she said.

Like Juhring, senior Riley Loehr felt that “they just have so many resources that make the college process so much easier.”

CollegeTracks is a “non-profit that works with MCPS to help guide and assist students through the college application process,” says Program Director Paula Kalksma. Inside their office, located toward the back of the Media Center, sit the three women excited to tell anyone

about their program. “We provide college access services to any students who need just any type of guidance,” said Program Coordinator Daisy Faria with Ms. Lynch emphasizing how helpful they are and how they really encourage students to come. These college access services include assistance on main essays, supplemental essays, Coalition and Common Application questions, and anything having to do with applying to colleges.

CollegeTracks has been here at QO for close to a year now, and many seniors have finished their applications with their help. Juniors are beginning to get help as well to get a head start on the process.

CollegeTracks’s office is in the back of the Media Center, opening at 9:00 AM every day, with Paula and Daisy’s email addresses and phone numbers on the door if you can’t reach them at school.



PHOTO COURTESY OF BRIGHTSTORM.COM

Potential calendar changes for next school year

By **JENNA LEVY**
Senior Staff Writer

Gone are the days where students can plan a vacation for Labor Day; Montgomery County Public Schools now have the authority to start the 2020-2021 school year before Labor Day once again, which will be on September 7 in 2020.

Though the calendar for next year is not set in stone, MCPS held a regular business meeting on October 8 to discuss possible scenarios. According to the MCPS website, schools will either start on September 8, September 1, or August 31; the last day of school would be on either June 24, June 18, or June 16, respectively.

In a WTOP article, the executive director of the school sys-

tem’s Office of the Chief Operating Officer, Essie McGuire, said, “Because Labor Day is so late, we can actually start in September and still start before Labor Day.”

If it were up to him, freshman JJ Pomrunk would have the school year start on September 1, because he “doesn’t want to be in school for all of June. Having a break right after the school year starts allows students to slowly get into the routine of school again...rather than jumping into the year.” Furthermore, Pomrunk would advocate for the school days to “start 30 minutes later to get more sleep in the mornings.”

According to MCPS, for each scenario there would be “182 instructional days, a full spring break, [and a] full professional

day for grading and planning at the end of the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd quarters.”

Starting again this year, spring break is extended to 10 days. Sophomore Ellie Bowman likes the idea of having the opportunity to “recover from the long school year and have time to go on vacation before exams start.” Since Bowman’s freshman year, spring break has been a short six days long, which “doesn’t give students anything to look forward to after winter break,” she says. Next school year, Montgomery County’s Board of Education decided to continue with the long spring break, which came back this year. Though nothing is officially set for the next school year, students seem to be excited for the 2020-2021 school calendar.



PHOTO COUTRESY OF PATCH.COM

New additions at Johnson Property near QO

By **LYLA KIM**
Staff Writer

This past summer, Quince Orchard High School added several portables due to an increasing population in the community. But will this be enough?

Johnson Property recently launched a new development behind the Safeway right next to QO. There are construction plans for a new neighborhood. According to the North Potomac Citizen Association, “The Chase at Quince Orchard’ proposes 106 residential units comprised of 26 single-family detached houses,

80 townhomes, and a one acre park on 14+ acres.”

The plan was first set into motion in December of 2016.

Due to multiple additions in the area, district lines will be shifted, which will in turn, place students in different schools based on where they live. Not only does this affect the placement of students, but it also affects taxes. The Montgomery County Planning Board has reported that taxes will be impacted by approximately \$2 million in order to fund the development.

Due to redistricting and

taxes, there has been a lot of controversy with the annexation of this new neighborhood. Many protested against it, but in the end, the Johnson family won. While we may be losing one of the last large pieces of undeveloped land in this area, on the bright side, there will be new faces to attend QO.

After phase one is complete, building the homes, phase two and three will begin. Phase two and phase three work on renovating the shopping center right next to it. The plan is to take down Safeway and turn it into restaurants, offices, per-

sonal services, retail, banking, and more. The shopping center next to it—currently housing California Tortilla, Inferno, CVS, Chopshop, and the bank—will be an extension of the Safeway area. This has the possibility of attracting more people, which would in turn boost real estate prices. This new shopping center will also create a larger variety of options to eat.

Next time you’re driving down Darnestown road, take a look, because soon you’ll be looking at a whole new neighborhood.

“Not only does this affect the placement of students, but it also affects taxes.”

- Lyla Kim



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³ The expected monthly principal and interest payment for a 15/15 adjustable rate mortgage of \$300,000 at an initial interest rate of 3.375% with zero points (3.710% APR) is \$1,326.29. Total estimated payments of \$477,463.50 (30 year repayment). Payment does not include taxes or insurance, actual payment may be higher. Rate is variable and can increase by no more than four percentage points every 15 years, never to exceed four percentage points above the initial rate (7.375% for this example). When the rate adjusts, your new rate will be the then current index (Weekly One Year Constant Maturity Treasury, or CMT) plus a margin of 2.750%, as long as the total adjustment does not exceed the 4.00% adjustment cap. The interest rates, annual percentage rates (APRs), discount points and rebates shown are subject to change without notice. Subject to credit qualifications and approval.

WHAT FESTIVITIES ARE

FEELS LIKE A FRIGHTFUL NIGHT

By BERI ALLEN
Staff Writer

Haunted houses and scary attractions have been an ongoing October and Halloween tradition for decades. And Maryland has its share of those popular Halloween attractions such as Markoff's Haunted Forest and the Field of Screams.

Markoff's, located in Dickerson MD, has consistently been ranked as #1 in the nation as the eeriest attraction for over 20 years - according to Markoff's website and raving reviews. With its terrifying trails and gory characters, it's guaranteed to make it a night you won't forget.

The Maryland Field of Screams in Olney, which is rated #1 in the DMV area and Delaware (according to their website), also puts on a horrifying show with haunted trails through pitch black woods. Bloodcurdling screams can be heard just from waiting in line, while skeletons gaze down on you from posts along the fence. Escaped insane asylum patients, mutilated corpses, and characters with chainsaws chase you down throughout the little cabins placed along the trail. Other attractions fill the farm land with axe throwing and making smores by bonfires. This is definitely a sight to scare you!

HALLOWEEN FESTIVITIES

By MATTHEW MINTON
Staff Writer

Every fall comes with activities unique to the season. With the color of the trees changing, the weather cooling, and the wind picking up, the atmosphere that fall offers makes it a unique and festive season. Here are some of the things that fellow QO students liked to do on Halloween:

"It's a lot of fun getting to be someone else for a day." - Jonathan Posadas-Pinon (11)

"Definitely carving pumpkins, pranking people, and getting candy." - Sofia Marugan (10)

"It's fun to get all dressed up with friends and have a fun time." - Colin McHugh (11)

"Trick or treat on Halloween with friends and run around some random neighborhood." - Alexa Tober (11)

What appeals to QO students about Halloween?

"Everyone can just really turn into themselves but in a different form." - Sheng Chang (11)

"It lets kids get a bunch of candy and gives people an excuse to party." - Julian Hernandez (11)

"It gives you the chance to be creative and weird without judgement." - Samuel Mercer (12)

"It's the day to eat your favorite candies." - Brianna Villegas (11)

What are QO students' favorite candy?

"Kit-Kat bars." - Luke Evans (12)

"Hershey Kisses: you can say here's a kiss, but really you are only giving them chocolate." - Gabriel Merilos (11)

"Twix: they're crunchy, smooth and delicious." - Alexander Resendiz (10)

"Candy corn, the top-tier candy." - Kenny Somaiya (11)

E GOING ON THIS FALL?

DIFFERENT THANKSGIVING TRADITIONS

By STACY SHIN
Staff Writer

Every year when the leaves begin to fall and the temperature drops, we know summer is being pushed out as fall is settling in. And each year, around this time, Americans celebrate the holiday of giving thanks. On the fourth Thursday of November, Americans follow both well-known traditions, such as eating turkey and watching football, and unique ones their family follows every year.

Junior Giuliana Capraro said she looks forward to “seeing my grandparents and watching soccer with my brothers, dad, and grandpa.” She also enjoys eating huge three-course meals over the holiday break.

Junior Amanda McNeal says, “My family plays a trivia game every year called Giggle Gobble and eat[s] cinnamon apples.” She said her family is extremely competitive when it comes to trivia during Thanksgiving.

Quince Orchard computer science teacher Omari Sarjeant says his Thanksgiving mainly consists of “watching the NFL and spending time with his family.”

Some people who have a background from outside of the United States celebrate differently. Junior Emily Klaus, who moved here from Brazil in seventh grade, said, “We don’t celebrate Thanksgiving because we’re not American, but I like watching soccer with my brother.”





Women power expands through QO

New elective Women's Studies receives positive feedback for its first year

By **CLAIRE SULLIVAN**
Editor-in-Chief

With today's diverse and ever-changing perspective on women, a long-awaited class was finally offered at Quince Orchard this year—Women's Studies. The on-level social studies elective covers relevant feminist culture: vast perspectives on media, society, health matters, and the history of women. Overall, the discussion-based course has the intent of encouraging students to be more aware of the world around them.

Jessica Burdette, a teacher at QO since 2006, has been dedicating herself to make this class available to students since the first year she has been teaching. "I was discouraged at times," said Burdette over conversation about the process of getting this class to QO. "People told me it was too much work,

or that I was too busy." Despite the criticism, Burdette completed her plan successfully.

Once she realized that the class was already offered at different Montgomery County high schools, the process became slightly simpler—instead of having to go through numerous programs and additional steps, all she needed was the principal's approval. From there, she promoted the class, planned the curriculum and the topics to be covered, encouraged support from students and staff, and fully dedicated herself to make this class a success. In the end, it was, resulting in enough students signing up to create two sections of the class, with 23 students in each period.

Although the class is called "Women's Studies," the content covers much more than just history. "It's more than studying women," added Burdette. "Everyone needs to realize what

women's impact on society is, too. Women have double standards for men and mistreat other women as well, so the class is more about being aware."

In addition to elaborating on controversial topics, the class covers topics about groups besides women. "We discuss different perspectives and issues that not only impact women, but other genders, races, and sexualities as well," said senior Chris Barron. "Makes the class perfect for anyone."

Each member of the class is given a journal to not only complete daily warm-ups, but reflect on the subject matter at hand. "Some days all we do is talk," said junior Assatou Toure. "We engage everyone's opinion, and it makes everyone look from a different perspective." The class is seen as a safe space, where the students are encouraged to speak and connect their personal lives to the class content.

The class's most recent unit was on how women are portrayed in the media, where students analyzed movie clips, songs, news networks, and articles to uncover the truth behind society's views on women in power. "It's shocking, but at the same time it's not surprising. You always question, 'Is this the way things really are?' But you know that is the reality," said Barron.

Not only does the class learn about existing problems, but they learn how to be more aware and how to take action. For example, they discuss what questions women don't have to answer at an interview, what to expect in the workforce, and even a potential unit covering self-defense.

The class is only offered to 11th and 12th graders, not only to allow the class sizes to remain small, creating a tighter bond between students, but also due to the mature content.

Overall, the positive feedback

from current students taking the course was abundant. "Everything is amazing," said Toure. "Society needs to change in general, and this class empowers us to do that. This world isn't going to change itself, so instead of bringing each other down, we really have to work together."

Note: The author of this article is currently taking the Women's Studies class.



IMAGE COURTESY OF REDBUBBLE

New snack machines not necessarily healthier

By **ZOE BELL**
Editor-in-Chief

Teens today are all too familiar with nutrition. "You shouldn't eat so much junk food," we've all heard our parents say at one point. Nutrition is discussed everywhere from health class to biology. Making better food-related choices is not so easy, however, when there are junk food options literally around every corner.

In an effort to be more

health-conscious, MCPS middle and high schools replaced the Royale vending machines with new Vend Natural snack machines beginning on October 1, which is unique to our county; steps towards more nutritious snacks have not been initiated in other parts of Maryland.

"Other schools besides Montgomery County take all kinds of chips," said George Douala, an employee for Vend Natural. "This is the only county where there's a selection."

According to QO's busi-

ness manager, Judith Yu, MCPS feedback prompted the installation of new vending machines.

"The items in there are supposed to be approved by the Division of Food & Nutrition," Yu said. "You'll see that a lot of snacks they're making [whole] wheat or grain."

The new snacks include whole grain Pop-Tarts, Trix cereal bars, chocolate chip cookies, popcorn, and nuts, which have been popular additions for students. Health teacher Susan Soule claims that whole grain in snacks is a mostly healthy alternative.

"If whole grain is listed as the first ingredient, then that's a positive," said Soule. "It's supplying fiber, which is needed for our digestive system because it helps to move bacteria out of the body."

Despite the move towards whole grain, few students believe that the new snacks are actually healthier.

"There's still junk food in there," said senior Sarah Mesri.

Senior Jennifer Bernedo, who buys a snack from the vending machines once every two weeks, would agree.

"I don't know if they really promote eating healthy," Bernedo said.

Whole grain doesn't automatically mean the food is healthy. "[Whole grain snacks] may be doing something positive," Soule added, "but things like Pop-Tarts generally have added sugar. Although the fiber is still effective, the added sugar can convert to fat."

In addition to the arguably healthier food options, these vending machines are complete with a touchscreen, card reader (which reportedly does not work), and even an Apple Pay feature.

"They're pretty high-tech," said sophomore Eric Price. "I think these [vending machines] are better; the touch-

screens are pretty cool. They also actually give you your snacks, unlike the other one."

Although our school's new vending machines are more technologically advanced, healthier, and widely popular, there are still mixed feelings regarding the recent change.

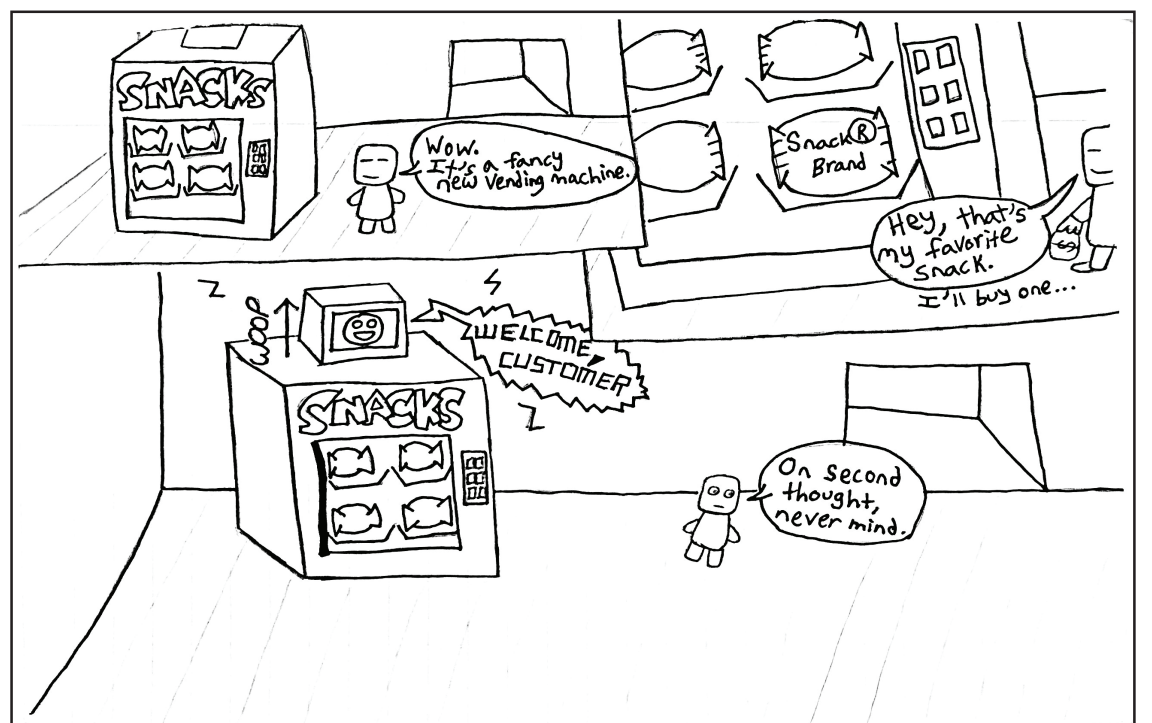
"I don't know if they really promote eating healthy."

- Jennifer Bernedo



PHOTO BY ZOE BELL

Vend Natural recently installed new snack machines inside and outside of the cafeteria.



COMIC BY JAKE STEIN



REVIEW

Would you like to see a new twist on Robin Hood? Because we Sherwood!

By MADDIE POMRINK and FAITH LANE

Staff Writer and Senior Staff Writer

QO Theatre has hit another home run with the fall play “The Somewhat True Tale of Robin Hood,” presenting a fresh, witty take on a classic story. Members of the QO Theatre cast and crew worked tirelessly for over a month to prepare impressive sets and performances, telling a never-before-seen perspective on the tale of Robin Hood. References to modern culture, such as a rendition of “Baby Shark” and a bowling competition, appeal to younger audiences and help add a contemporary twist.

The play is definitely a comedy, as senior Ryan Omeroso, a member of stage left crew, describes it as “a weird and funny version of Robin Hood.” One key character that contributed to this humor was one of the three main merry men, Little John, played by junior Cora Barr. She used her charisma throughout the play to entertain and fill the audience with laughter. Another character, “Lady in Waiting,” played by junior Elisa McCaw, had the audience members howling as she performed her trademark shriek of fear many times throughout the play.

Junior Connor McCaw, who played Prince John, and senior Cyrus Escalera, who played the Sheriff of Nottingham, used their evil laughs and sinister plot-



PHOTO BY FAITH LANE

ting to play the two villains very well.

Lastly, senior Malachi Green, who played the lead character of Robin Hood, noted that as a lead he “has a huge responsibility to guide and be an example for the rest of the cast.” Green added, “I enjoyed doing Robin Hood, especially the bowling scene towards the end of the play.”

As this play had no clear issues, impressive acting, and quick scene transitions, it was captivating as a member of the audience. As much as the acting was great, the behind-the-scenes

work definitely contributed to the success of the play. The crew worked hard to help put on a very successful play.

If you’re looking for a fun way to spend an afternoon or evening this Saturday, bring your friends and family to spend a couple of hours immersed in the magical world of the Sherwood Forest and Palace of Nottingham. You will not be able to resist laughing along to the hilarious script and performances. You can come out on Saturday, November 16, at 2 PM and 7 PM to catch the show.

It’s “a weird and funny version of Robin Hood.”

- Ryan Omeroso

REVIEW

Parasite: an honest, brutal look at class

By MATTHEW MINTON
Staff Writer

On May 25, director Bong Joon-ho’s latest film *Parasite* became the first South Korean film to ever win the Palme d’Or, the top prize awarded by the Cannes Film Festival. The film currently holds an impressive 99% approval rating on Rotten Tomatoes and a 95/100 on Metacritic. The film opened in limited release in the United States on October 11 to an extremely impressive per-theater-average of \$128,082 — the highest per-theater-average since 2016’s *La La Land*. Moreover, the movie was even the second runner-up for the Toronto International Film Festival’s audience award, which suggests that the film will end up being a strong Oscar contender.

With all of this in mind, does *Parasite* live up to the hype? To put it simply: yes.

The best way to watch *Parasite* is by knowing as little as possible. The general premise of the film is that it centers around a family of four who are all unemployed; after a golden opportunity arises for Ki-woo, the son of the family, the entire family find themselves getting tangled into the lives of the glamorous and wealthy Park family.

From the beginning to the very last frame, Bong never fails to capture the audience’s attention; every scene feels so carefully directed and crafted. What makes *Parasite* such a particularly effective film is in how it smartly explores the economic gap between the rich and the poor. The main protagonists of the film represent how people of lower classes have to take certain extremes to try and reach the top, and at the end of the film, it’s hard to sympathize with all of their

actions—but who can really blame them? The film tackles the idea of social mobility, and largely argues against this “pipe dream” that anybody can become rich with a good work ethic; sometimes, it’s just about being born into the right family, or being lucky. For every person on top of society, there is another person at the very bottom, struggling to get enough water and food to survive another day.

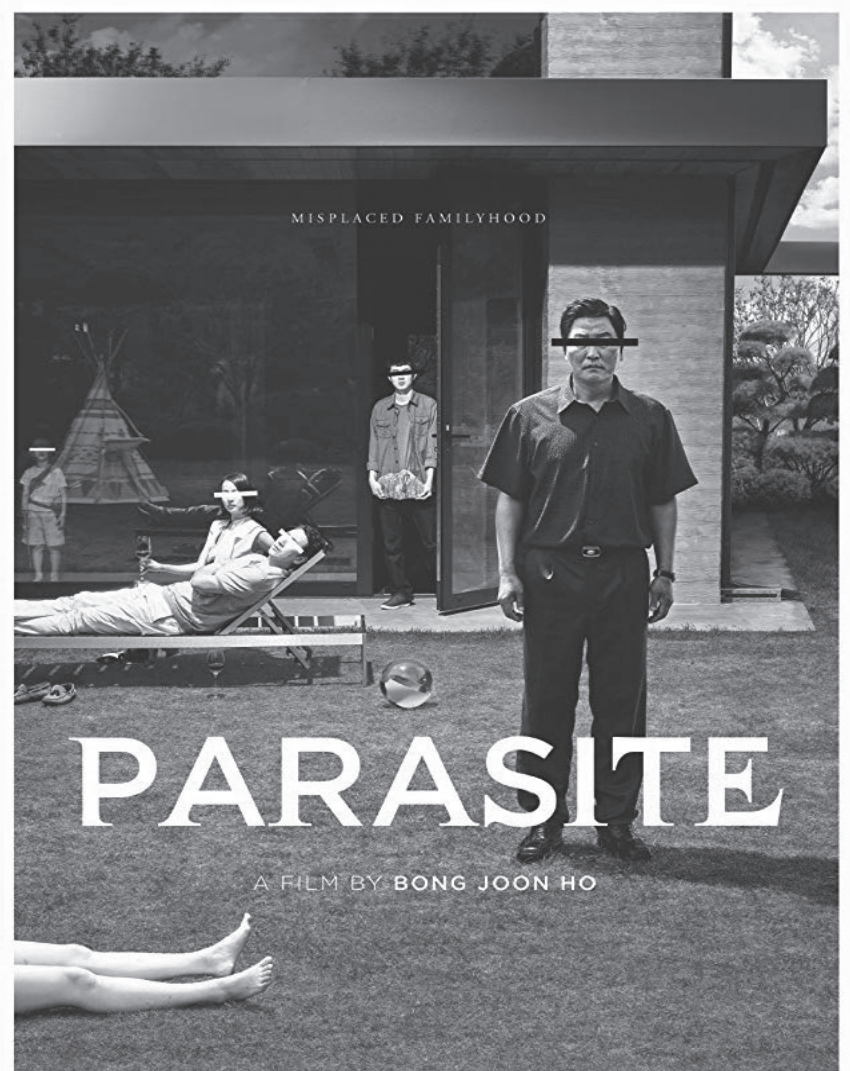
Furthermore, what makes the film so captivating is its frequent use of dark, bleak comedy that is absolutely hilarious. The film never feels like it is being stripped of its serious undertones, which is a tricky balancing act to pull off. *Parasite* fits into so many genres at once, and it refreshingly fails to fit into any one little box.

Other noteworthy elements of the film include the production design: the Parks’ house is beautiful and helps to exemplify their wealth. The extremely memorable score also contributes to the film’s tension and overall stakes.

At the end of the day, *Parasite* is a South Korean film, but its themes and appeal are universal. People who choose not to watch this movie solely for it being in a different language are truly missing out, as this feels like something that will be studied in film school for years to come.

The film is expanding to more theaters nationwide, and comes highly recommended for fans of good cinema.

Every scene feels so carefully directed and crafted.



SONG KANG HO LEE SUN KYUN CHO YEO JEONG CHOI WOO SHIK PARK SO DAM
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PHOTO COURTESY OF IMDB.COM



Jantzen's Journal: The Nats at long last are World Series Champs

By **JANTZEN FOCHT**
Editor-in-Chief

As I stepped through the centerfield gates on that cool yet pleasant October night, I was reminded of how far DC baseball had come since its reintroduction to the fans back in '05, and how much we had lost during those dark ages when we had no franchise from the early 70's to mid 2000's. Laughter and joy filled the air, balloons were sprouted all around the stadium, vendors sold their new merchandise to excited fans. Instead of feeling nervous or pessimistic about the Nats (like I admittedly usually do), a calm wave instead came over me, as it finally hit me that the Nationals now had the opportunity to do something that hadn't occurred for over 80 years in the District: become the world champions. A week later, this dream came to fruition as the Washington Nationals claimed their first World Series championship in a 6-2, Game 7 win on the road over the Houston Astros.

I want to start off this piece by saying that Washington baseball had not been this way for a long time. In fact, for almost 100 years, Washingtonians had their hearts ripped out by their beloved Senators, and more recently the Nationals. Whether it be the Senators—who, having last won a world championship in 1924, were more commonly known for the signature catchphrase, "First in war, first in peace, and last in the American League"—and their continuous mediocrity, or the Nationals constantly being abysmal or choking in the playoffs, the baseball fans of the DMV have put up with a lot for almost a century. While the Senators and

Nationals losing was often handled alright by the fans, what really demoralized this city was the team's departure to Minnesota in '61, and the expansion franchise Senators' relocation to Arlington in '72. With these two moves, almost a whole generation of people had been robbed of witnessing a franchise compete in the District, and never was able to bond with their loved ones, friends, and coworkers over the great game of baseball.

But with the relocation of the depleted Montreal Expos franchise to Washington

in 2005, a youthful optimism and pride was born, as baseball was now back in the District of Columbia. However, this excitement was quickly quelled as reality struck the Nats, and everyone who watched them play from the RFK years to around 2011 realized that they could simply not compete at a high level. They would have players who generated hype, such as original National Ryan Zimmerman and phenom prospect Stephen Strasburg, but they couldn't really win with them alone.

For the longest time, it felt like the Nats play was going to be appalling, and that was the case up until the 2012 season. With the call-up of the now infamous Bryce Harper, the emergence of star free agent and clubhouse leader Jayson Werth, and other players finding their way such as lefty pitcher Gio Gonzalez and shortstop Ian Desmond, the Nats finally broke through, won 98 games, and made the playoffs for the first time ever. While the Nats blew a late Game 2-run lead in Game 5 to the St. Louis Cardinals, by making the playoffs—and with Jayson Werth's season-saving home run in 2012—the Nationals finally proved to the world that they could go toe-to-toe with the best teams in the MLB.

In the ensuing six years, the Nats would have a common theme to their play; they were always predicted to reach or win the World Series, but in reality would win 90+ games almost every year, make the playoffs, then tragically lose in every series to experienced teams like the Giants, Dodgers, and Cubs. It was a never-ending feeling of despair in Washington, like that movie Groundhog Day, where every day Nats fans woke up knowing they were going to choke in the playoffs and couldn't do anything about it. In addition, with a mediocre 2018 season which saw their homegrown star Harper leave, it felt like the Nats championship window was closing. Add on top of that the Nats started 19-31, and Anthony Rendon's upcoming free agency, it felt like we were doomed to fall back to mediocrity. By the end of May, manager Davey Martinez was set to be fired, and the franchise's direction was



PHOTO COURTESY OF DAVID J. PHILLIP

After 14 years in the District, the Washington Nationals are on top of the baseball world.

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Boys soccer looks to improve next year

By **BEN STROBER**
Staff Writer

Quince Orchard boys soccer came into the season with high expectations this upcoming season. This team had heart and pride, and they wanted to prove to everybody that they were good enough to win a state championship.

Quince Orchard had a strong pre-season, besting all of the opponents in their scrimmages easily. Although the team graduated multiple seniors in the year prior, they had many younger players on the rise. Some of this young talent they possessed were juniors Elliott Eager,

Jack Taliano, and Brian Lovo.

"Our goal is to get better as a team and ultimately win a state championship someday," Eager said of the young team's goals on improving and growing. Senior Alex Soler, one of the starting midfielders for the team and leading players, says that "this season we improved as a team and worked hard together to win."

Ultimately, the Cougars finished the season with a 6-8 record and lost to Gaithersburg in the first round of the playoffs. The fall season of boys soccer has concluded. However, this team has a lot of young talent on the come up, and they will be hungry to prove everyone wrong next season.



PHOTO COURTESY OF GIOVANNI PIZZINO

Senior Cole Schamber uses his speed and agility to move the ball down the field.

Girls volleyball has promising future, headlined by underclassmen talent

By **KENDALL LUMSDEN**
Staff Writer

As the regular season for fall sports ends, there is one team that is often underrated but needs more attention as the years go on. The girls varsity volleyball team finished their regular season with a 9-5 record. Senior captain Lena Mastracci had "high hopes" that their hard work and dedication this season would pay off in the postseason, but unfortunately the team was cut off with a loss in the region quarterfinals.

Mastracci and co-senior captions Hannah Kokinda and Sarah Donnelly diligently led the Cougars through the 2019-20 season. "The relationships formed with my team are all very positive, and I value all of them," Mastracci said.

Last season, the Cougars ended their regular season with a 9-7 record and fought hard until they lost in the first round of the playoffs to Gaithersburg High School. Junior Emily Klaus, who has been on varsity since her freshman year, explained that they encountered a bumpy road with all the injuries, but the inten-

sity came back and better this season.

Following the departure of last year's seniors, the team received a new addition who was able to fit right in with her teammates. Freshman Ela Karamete says she was expecting "a lot of pressure, but the girls were all really nice, so it was really easy to go into." Sophomores Pelin Altintas, Bianca Gutierrez and Ella Roth were all on varsity last year as freshmen and are able to relate to Karamete's feelings.

Roth says that the team had been working "a lot better together" this year. Roth also believes that their chemistry on the court has a lot to do with how much the coaches make them focus and work hard in practice.

Klaus emphasized how much they interact outside of school, and Kokinda said they all even went kickboxing together as a bonding activity. The team believes that their strong relationships and leadership have had a big impact on their performance this season. Klaus recalls how they "beat some teams that we didn't beat last year, so that was good," and that they just continued "getting better as the season goes on."

Even though head coach Allison Cable doesn't work at Quince Orchard, Mastracci believes that her "dedication to the sport and the team has a very positive impact on us." Klaus explains how the coaches give them a "study day" if they need to miss practice for homework or school-related reasons. Donnelly says that the whole coaching staff works hard to "motivate us in practice and in our games."

Although the team's record improved from last year, on October 31, the team fell short to Richard Montgomery 3-1 in the region quarterfinals.





ESSAY

College football — been here for a minute

By **BEN FLEISCHER**
Senior Staff Writer

College football is the American game. It's a game which contains a multitude of contradictions: it's a beautiful game and a violent one; a game of rebels and magicians, taskmasters and machines; a game that venerates the old and still finds room for the new; a game ruled by giants but in love with underdogs; a game where generations have faced racism, and faced it down; a game where a young man can risk it all, for a chance to live forever. This is college football.

This year is the 150th year of college football, marking many years of passion, rivalries, and change.

It all started in 1869 when 25 students from Rutgers University lined up against 25 students from Princeton University. However, this game, the first ever game of college football, bore very little resemblance to today's football. Football was about toughness and strictly that, a mindset that began soon after the Civil War. The game of football was one where men could battle it out with little instruction and just go after those who were in their way.

After this first game, the concept spread like wildfire, building toughness across the country, especially the Northeast. A man named Walter Camp was one who began the process of changing football to be how we know it today. He wanted the game to be more like organized war than all-out brawls.

None of this could have occurred, though, if it weren't for the coaches. Knute Rockne was the first coach to change the landscape of football and is now regarded as one of the greatest coaches in college football history. To this day, Rockne has the highest winning percentage of any major college football coach ever. He started football at the University of Notre Dame,

setting the path for generations. He was the first true celebrity coach, making an insignificant university in South Bend, Indiana, a national phenomenon. Adding to his resume, no coach was ever better in public relations. Coaches today look back on what Rockne did and see what they can do similar to him in order to sell their program and win. Ever since Rockne, the faces of college football have always been the coaches.

While these coaches were building boys into men, many were experiencing injuries and some were even being killed. In the early years of football, the game was brutal and very violent. After a number of deaths and crucial injuries, President Teddy Roosevelt stepped in to make the coaches figure out how to make the game less dangerous. The NCAA was created in 1905 and ended up legalizing the forward pass in 1906, resulting in less "head bashing."

Ever since that change, every generation has been attempting to make changes to make the game safer. These changes have been proven to be positive, like the improvements of helmets. The game of football has produced a never-ending duel between violence and beauty. The beauty being how players can get away from the violence and it turns out that beauty often wins the gruesome battle.

Another major piece of college football history is segregation. Bigger, more well-known schools heavily resisted integrating African-Americans into the sport. Over time, though, little by little schools began to include more people than just the white male. Integration in college football came to be a big boost to the civil rights movement. Today, many of the powerhouses in college football happen to be in the South and were in the group of schools that were resisting. Now, African-Americans are key people in their immense success.

When college football and television



PHOTO COURTESY OF ROBERT BECK / SPORTS ILLUSTRATED

A GAME OF INCHES: Texas QB Vince Young dove to score a touchdown against USC in one of the most iconic college football games of all time.

were both young, the NCAA rarely allowed more than one nationally televised game a week. If you wanted to stay up to date, you needed to read the paper, listen over the radio, or go to the games in person.

Once the smaller schools began to innovate the game of football with new schemes, they gained national attention and inevitably beat the powerhouses that were there. This led to the Supreme Court ending the power that the NCAA had over TV rights, making it so every team could be televised.

These smaller schools made their names and put themselves on the map by continuously offering creativity and innovation. Going against the norm is how schools get big wins and how programs have grown over time.

With all of this being said, college football is more than just a game. It is about being part of a special community, a part of something bigger than oneself. Each school has their own rituals and traditions. Every weekend, people come to-

gether for one reason: to cheer on their teams and be a part of the community.

The loyalty, dedication, courage, and sacrifice that each player makes so that their community can win, not just themselves, is what makes college football special. To love something is to be enveloped into that thing. Love is the strongest motivation in the world, no matter what it is for. One doesn't fight or play because of what is in front, they fight because of the love of what is behind.

Everything that one does for their school—whether they are a player leaving it all on the field, or a fan cheering their hearts out for their team—contributes to making college football different from everything else. College football is something that will come into your life; whether it is now, during college, or after your college years, it does not matter, and you should welcome it with open arms. If you couldn't tell, these past 150 years have been ones for the ages. Just you wait for the future of this great sport.

Washington Mystics continue DC's hot streak

Mystics put on sunglasses to block out the Connecticut Sun as they win their first WNBA championship

By **ZACH LEVEY**
Senior Staff Writer

When Elena Delle Donne joined the Washington Mystics in 2017, she made it very clear what her intentions were for the team: win the WNBA championship. Delle Donne was very successful as she and the rest of the team won the first ever championship for the Mystics.

Although the WNBA isn't as popular as other sports, the Washington Mystics have many loyal supporters in our Quince Orchard community. Senior Jason Millen describes the postseason for the girls as "overwhelming and sensational" as they entered the playoffs as the favored one-seed and received a first round bye. The Mystics first series was against the Las Vegas Aces which whom they defeated with ease behind Emma Meesseman's 30 point performance in game 2. The Mystics finished this series 3-1 and were ready and eager to face the Connecticut Sun in the WNBA championship. The championship series is best of 5 games instead of best of 3.

The series against the Sun started off a little slower than preferred as the Sun quickly tied up the series 1-1 and looked very dangerous and very strong defensively. The Sun stopped the star forward, Elena Delle Donne, by all means necessary and shut her down as she had 0 points and only 2 rebounds. However, the Mystics bounced back in game three, but it wasn't enough yet. The Sun forced a final game five in which the winner of this game would win it all. Even when the Sun looked like they could run away with the title, Millen was never worried. "I watched these girls play all season and knew that they wouldn't settle for second place."

The Mystics came back to Washington and wanted to win it in front of the home crowd. Whether it was being back in Washington or just the pressure of game five, Delle Donne made sure she would not be shut down again. Delle Donne finished the game with 21 points, 9 rebounds, and 2 assists and Meesseman finished the game with 22 points, 3 rebounds, and 3 assists. The clock then hit triple zeros with a final

score of 89-78, Mystics. After the confetti fired, Emma Meesseman was named the 2019 finals MVP (most valuable player).

The Mystics continue the Washington Sports hot streak after they received their first WNBA title in franchise history.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE WASHINGTON MYSTICS

CELEBRATION IS ON: The Mystics celebrate together after a win against the Sun to give them the WNBA championship on their home court.



ATHLETE OF THE MONTH QUESTIONNAIRE

Field Hockey



Anna Beville '20
Senior Anna Beville is a midfielder for the varsity squad. Her communication skills on the field allow the team to connect and blow out their opponents.

Girls Soccer



Giuliana Capraro '21
Junior Giuliana Capraro has been on varsity for the past two years. Her speed is evident as she blows past opponents in the midfield.

Girls XC



Monica Soni '20
Senior Monica Soni has the ability to dodge trees and sticks while running at the speed of lightning. She is a great cheerleader, too, cheering as the boys run their races.

Boys XC



Benji Dubin '21
Junior Benji Dubin is the top runner on the cross country team. His speed and confidence help carry the team to victory.

Football



Anthony Spano '22
Sophomore Anthony Spano is one player you don't want to mess with. After winning States as a freshman, it was a no-brainer that he would play varsity again.

Boys Soccer



Brendan Fox '22
Sophomore Brendan Fox is a starter on the varsity soccer team. He is a stone wall on defense: his blocks in the backfield have made the difference in games.

We asked these athletes the following questions...

	Anna Beville	Giuliana Capraro	Monica Soni	Benji Dubin	Anthony Spano	Brendan Fox
If you could spend Thanksgiving with one teacher who would it be?	Mr. Schweizer	Mrs. Jones	Mr. Line	Mr. Pelkey	Mr. Gonzalez	Mr. Line
What was the best part of your season?	Lilja Paltala	Scoring one of the set pieces	Winning the Paint Branch race	County Championship	The Gaithersburg game	Playing with my friends
What is your favorite type of pie?	Pecan	Chocolate	Apple	Apple	Apple	Pumpkin
If you were president and could have three people assist you, who would you pick?	My cat Lilja Paltala Melanie Frank	Mrs. Jones Kate Farone The Rock	Mr. Schuman Michelle Obama My dog	Max Lu John Tanali Nick Johnson	Carter Taggart Avi Levine Tyler Miller	My Sister My Dad My Mom
How many chickens would it take to kill an elephant?	1	0.2	1,000	300	They wouldn't kill the elephant	2

'Stay in the fight': the story of the 2019 Nationals

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in serious doubt.

But this all quickly changed by the time the dog days of summer came around. Suddenly, the Nats started winning game after game, albeit against some pretty poor teams. People thought that, while it was all fine and dandy, it wouldn't last. Then, they started piling on wins against some great teams, like the Dodgers, Brewers, and Cubs. . By the time the season ended, the Nats went on a miraculous 74-38 run after starting off 12 games under .500 to make the playoffs.

The motto for this season had been "stay in the fight," and boy, did the hometown squad do just that. Even though they had been down in all three elimination games, the boys fought back and came out victorious in every single one. With clutch heroics from young superstar Juan Soto, smooth third baseman Anthony Rendon, and one of my favorite players, Howie Kendrick, the pure hitting utility man, the Nats clawed their way into the NLCS, where they took care of the over-rated Cardinals with ease, sweeping them

in four games. Now, it was on to face the well-oiled offensive machine in Houston, and one of the scariest pitching rotations in baseball history. The prognosticators said we had no chance; little did they know that we had fed off that same underdog mentality for over five months.

In the first two games in Houston, the Nats game out swinging, securing a close win against Cy Young candidate Gerrit Cole, then absolutely obliterating the 'Stros in Game 2. Everyone felt pretty good about our chances at winning the series on our home turf, but it was never going to be that easy, especially due to the fact that the Astros offense was more akin to the famous Yankees "Murderer's Row" lineup than just your average ballclub. The Astros then came into the District, utterly dismantled the Nats' offense, and shockingly stole all three wins on the road. The outlook looked grim for DC fans' storybook ending. But this team was unlike the feeble-minded clubs of yesteryear They had "stayed in the fight" the whole year, and weren't going to give up just like that.

With their backs against the wall in

Game 6, even though it seemed like they weren't playing their best, Strasburg held his own until the Nats could provide him with some runs, and with Soto's monster home run against Justin Verlander, the Nats finally looked like themselves again. They would go on to win Game 6, forcing a do-or-die Game 7.

In the first Game 7 in franchise history, Scherzer, whose season looked like it was possibly over after experiencing extreme neck and back spasms a few days prior, trudged his way through five innings of admittedly sloppy two-run baseball against star pitcher Zach Grienke, who was pitching lights out.

By the seventh inning, the Nats were still down, but there was hope. After a solo homer by Rendon to cut the lead in half, Grienke then walked Soto and was pulled after a stellar 7 innings pitched.

Then, when his team needed him the most, Howie smacked a low and away pitch to right field. It kept going and going, and as the ball felt like it was in the air for an eternity, it tailed to the right, and clanged against the foul pole for a home run.

The baseball gods were finally behind us! We could see the light at the end of the tunnel, and boy, did we make a run for it.

Patrick Corbin pitched another outstanding inning, and with more runs added on by Soto and Adam Eaton, the Nats now had a 4-run lead to work with, needing only three more outs. In my head, I began to think to myself, "Oh my God, we are actually going to win the World freaking Series!"

To finish the Astros off, Martinez brought in righty Daniel Hudson to get the final three outs. Then, with a strikeout against Michael Brantley, the Nats had finally did it. After 100 years of disappointments, failures, and controversy, the Washington Nationals finally did it.

After the game, I hugged my Dad, who started this crazy fandom of mine all the way back in '05 when he took me to my first game at RFK Stadium. The celebration of a lifetime had begun. We at long last could say that we were the champions of the world.

The only thing that could be sweeter than this, you ask? Going back to back.